

Rep. Marcy Kaptur welcomed Vice President Joe Biden to Northwest Ohio and during a private meeting asked the Obama Administration to release funds under the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. Congresswoman Kaptur said local communities in the Ninth Congressional District, including Toledo, have been forced to lay off safety forces due to tight budget conditions. She said the COPS program grants could help alleviate the stress on law enforcement agencies heading into the summer months.

“I urged Vice President Biden to accelerate the release of funds to our communities,” Kaptur said. “Public safety is their primary responsibility and we want the federal government to be as helpful as possible. That means getting the COPS funding out the door as quickly as possible.”

Vice President Biden, chairman of the Middle Class Task Force, was joined by Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, U.S. Director for Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers Ed Montgomery, and Council of Economic Advisors member Michael Greenstone at Willard & Kelsey Solar Group, which manufactures solar panels in Perrysburg, Ohio.

Biden announced an executive order creating a White House Council on Automotive Workers and Communities that will be headed Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and National Economic Council Director Larry Summers. The inter-agency council will focus on issues facing the automotive industry and protection of the hardest-hit communities and workers. “The council builds on the foundation we have laid over the past months to speed up and increase recovery to the region and ensure workers see a coordinated response from their government,” Mr. Montgomery said.

Also at the meeting, Secretary Locke announced an expansion of the National Innovation Marketplace, which is part of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, to help manufacturers revitalize their supply chains. “We will bring together in one place the ideas, products and future opportunities that businesses need to identify new markets, diversify and create new jobs,” he said. “We will bring these services to you in a one-stop shop so you don’t have to go to four or five agencies to get the help you need.”

“We will measure our success, President Obama and I, not just by how well the economy does, but how well the middle class does,” Biden said. “There are far too many valueable resources, too much valuable capital, and especially too much human skill and know-how embedded in America’s manufacturing sector to allow it to go to waste. “The President and I are committed to doing everything we can to prepare the manufacturing sector for the future and to protect families and communities hurt by recent job losses.”

“We know that Lake Erie is the Saudi Arabia of wind power,” Congresswoman Kaptur said afterwards. “We have a strong partnership between the federal government, the University of Toledo and the state of Ohio to develop our green economy. We have the best workers in the world. Now we have to go about diversifying our economy.”

“With the right policies, Ohio can be at the forefront for producing parts for wind and solar

equipment,” said Amy Hanauer, director of Policy Matters Ohio, who participated in a roundtable discussion.